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Keynote Address by Her Royal Highness Princess Sonam Dechan Wangchuck at the Bhutan and Kyoto University 60th Anniversary Memorial Symposium

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Kyoto University, Kyoto, Japan: 25 October, 2017

Key Note Address by HRH Princess Sonam Dechan Wangchuck at the Bhutan and Kyoto University 60th Anniversary Memorial Symposium

**Kyoto University, Kyoto, Japan:
25th October 2017**

**President Mr. Yamagiwa
Distinguished Professor Matsuzawa
Eminent Scholars, faculties and students of the
Kyoto University
Friends of Bhutan
Ladies and Gentleman**

I offer my respects to Their Majesties the Emperor and Empress, and the people of Japan, and I bring you the best wishes and heartfelt prayers of His Majesty the

King, the Government and the People of the Kingdom of Bhutan.

This is my second visit to this beautiful city, and this time I am delighted to be amongst most distinguished scholars, generations of future leaders, and friends of Bhutan in one of the most prominent Universities in Japan, and one that has contributed profoundly to your nation's success.

The bond of friendship between the Bhutanese and Japanese people began in 1957, after the visit of my grandmother Her Majesty Ashi Kesang Choden Wangchuck, to the beautiful city of Kyoto. Nearly thirty years later, this seed of friendship gave rise to the establishment of formal diplomatic ties between our two countries, in 1986. This year is the 60th Anniversary of our journey together.

Sixty years is considered auspicious both in Japanese and Bhutanese traditions, because it marks the completion of one full life cycle. I am deeply honored to be here to celebrate this special anniversary.

Today, as we celebrate our long-standing friendship, let us dedicate this occasion to commemorate our founding members - Her Majesty the Royal Grandmother Ashi Kesang Choden Wangchuck, Professor Takeo Kuwabara, Professor Johji Ashida, Dr. Sasuke Nakao and Dasho Nishioka, who contributed to building the strong foundation of our friendship. Let us also congratulate, and thank Distinguished Professor Matsuzawa, and Professor Matsubayashi, who have each played a pivotal role in building upon that foundation and establishing the Bhutan-Kyoto University Friendship Program.

Thank you once again for your unconditional commitment in instituting and cultivating our friendship program, and bringing it to even greater heights!

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Japan and Bhutan are thousands of miles apart from each other, but the long-standing and close friendship between our two peoples has always made us feel much closer. Our relationship is based on a common spiritual heritage, our shared respect for the institution of monarchy as symbol of unity, reverence for our cultures and traditions that gives us unique identities, and many other shared social values. The people of Bhutan have always held a strong affection for Japanese, and have always celebrated the success of your great nation.

The government and the people of Bhutan are very thankful to Japan for your support and continuing contributions towards Bhutan's socio-economic development. Starting with the technical assistance of the Late Dasho Nishioka, Japan continues to be one of Bhutan's important development partners.

In the international arena, Bhutan and Japan enjoy an

exemplary relationship based upon our shared commitment to preserve our natural environment and our mutual desire to address the global issue of climate change through sustainable socio-economic development. Bhutan truly admires the leading role that Japan has assumed in addressing this global threat through smart and forward-looking policies, appropriate application of emerging technologies, and effective financing of innovative and impactful programmes. And though our material contribution might be humble, Bhutan is likewise making sincere efforts, most notably through our significant contribution in reducing global emissions.

Japan has proved to the world that unity, harmony and leadership are required to address our most pressing challenges and difficulties. Likewise, Bhutan has learned through our experiences that unity, harmony, and leadership will determine our successes.

Bhutan has faced several challenges in our history, but we overcame because we remained united under the guidance of our visionary and wise leaders.

As you know, Bhutan is a small nation – both in terms of size and population. The less than seven hundred thousand inhabitants of Bhutan cherish our unique Bhutanese culture and proud history, and our deep spirituality permeates our daily lives. Nine years ago, Bhutan became a Democratic Constitutional Monarchy, and our journey to democracy has been described as the most peaceful democratic transition in history. Our Constitutional transition was the culmination of two decades of patient planning and preparation, undertaken by our wise and visionary leaders. Such mindful preparation in pursuit of carefully chosen ends reflects our national spirit, and it is in this spirit that we proceed to build our democratic and legal institutions that will support our young democracy.

Bhutan's development philosophy of a "*Gross National Happiness*" as propounded by His Majesty the Fourth King, the "*Rule of Law*", and His Majesty Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck's vision for "*Just and Content Society*" are the basic foundations for our

democracy. Every Bhutanese shoulders the sacred duty to fulfill these noble visions. And it is the primary obligation of my generation to nurture future leaders, and citizens who will carry forward this sacred responsibility.

To achieve this, we are building strong institutions.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am delighted to share with you today, some of the progress we have made.

It was His Majesty who envisioned a Law School in Bhutan, and I was humbled when His Majesty entrusted me to establish, and lead this historic institution. I must admit that it has been a daunting task, but we are able to accomplish our mission because we worked hard, always reminded that failure wasn't an option, and the belief that we were creating something important.

I am very happy to announce that, this August, we successfully opened Bhutan's first law school – the **Jigme Singye Wangchuck School of Law**, and welcomed the first batch of 25 aspiring and talented students.

Bhutan's law school is small, but aims to transform the legal profession by endowing the country with its first generation of Bhutanese-trained lawyers, scholars, and leaders prepared to face the unique and difficult challenges of the future. By design, these young men and women will be trained, and educated to become citizens cognizant of the significance of sustainable development, the preservation of our natural and cultural environment, and the central challenge of climate change as one of the most challenging global issues of our times.

The concept of Gross National Happiness and Sustainable Economic Development are the basis of every aspect of JSW Law's existence –from its architectural design, and energy efficient construction to its unique course curriculum. It is our hope that JSW

Law will take a leading role in both these spheres in the coming years, as we gather great minds together towards a noble cause – one that will shape the course of humanity, and our world.

Mr. President, Distinguished Faculty and members of the Kyoto University,

We have just begun our journey one that Kyoto University has traversed for more than a century. I am deeply inspired by your hard work, and firm dedication in building such a prominent institution of wisdom and knowledge. Your success inspires us.

As we commemorate the 60th year of our friendship, a great opportunity lies ahead of us, to diversify and expand areas of our mutual cooperation. Our intellectual collaboration in the area of the Rule of Law will be of tremendous mutual benefit. It will deepen the existing bond between Bhutan and Kyoto University, and the exemplary relationship that Japan and Bhutan enjoy based on our shared vision for our people and the world – a noble vision of peace and harmony.

President Yamagiwa, Distinguished Prof. Matsuzawa, and the members of the Kyoto University, please accept my sincere appreciation for kindly inviting me here, and for your great warmth.

It is a gesture that reflects your firm dedication and support to our long-standing relationship, and genuine nature of the friendship between our two countries and people. May this friendship grow from strength to strength over the years!

I shall conclude with offering my deep gratitude and profound prayers to Their Imperial Majesties, the wonderful people of Japan, and to your Great Nation.

Thank You and Tashi Delek!

**Address by HRH Princess Sonam
Dechan Wangchuck at the Reception
Dinner hosted by Kyoto University at
Brighton Hotel**

Kyoto: 21 October 2017 at 17:25 Hrs

**Professor Matsuzawa,
Mr. Kadokawa,
Mr. Takashi Tsuji,
Ladies and Gentleman**

Good Evening!

I am delighted to be here in Kyoto - a beautiful city with over 1200 years of history. A city that witnessed the most challenging times of the past yet survived the hardship, and significantly advanced to lead industries and scientific institutions to make vital contributions towards inclusive development.

As a Bhutanese, I take pride in our unique culture and traditions, and it is very inspiring to learn that Kyoto, the heart of Japan's cultural heritage, has preserved your cherished properties in such a beautiful manner.

I am also very happy to be amongst the remarkable people, responsible for making significant contributions in building our friendship. As we know, the bond of friendship between Bhutan and Kyoto University began in 1957, and it has grown deeper every year with diverse areas of mutual cooperation.

Prof. Matsuzawa and Prof. Matsubayashi, please accept my appreciation for your personal commitment in formally launching Bhutan-Kyoto Friendship Program, after your visit to Bhutan in 2010. This program brings our two peoples together in exchange of ideas, knowledge and skills.

My Grandmother, Ashi Kesang Choden has very fond memories of her visit to this beautiful city. 60 years later, I am honored to be here as my grandmother was, to receive your great hospitality.

President Yamagiwa, Professor Matsuzawa and all the members of the Kyoto University, I hope that our friendship only grow stronger in the years to come.

Thank You & Tashi Delek

**Address by HRH Princess Sonam
Dechan Wangchuck at the Welcome
Reception Dinner hosted by Kyoto
University at Hotel New Otani**

Tokyo: 23 October 2017 at 18:00 Hrs

**Professor Matsuzawa,
Ms. Hitomi Tokuda,
Ladies and Gentleman**

Good Evening!

Ever since I was young, I had a great fascination and respect for Japan and its culture. From watching films by Akira Kurosawa, to reading the Tale of Genji, and my great appreciation for Murakami's books, to taking Japanese Art History in college. Hideyoshi's achievements inspired me, and reminded me of our own father of the First King of Bhutan.

We share many values, and this commonality brings us together.

Bhutan's guiding philosophy of Gross National Happiness ultimately aims to create a just and content society. It is a profound and universal philosophy that is in line with Japan's concept of human security.

The Japanese people have shown the world refinement and perfection in its art and culture, and the Japanese people have won our great respect for how you have overcome hardship, in unity and respect for one another.

I am thankful to Kyoto University for bringing everyone here together. Let us celebrate our friendship and pray that it grow from strength to strength.

Thank You & Tashi Delek